

## CHAPTER SIX

# The Growth of German Influence in Iran

THE present study embraces the period between 1918 and 1948. During this period Germany made an intensive effort to subject Iran to her influence. This spectacular release of Teutonic energy was, however, based on a tradition that it would be unwise to underestimate. Hence, we have found it necessary to precede the story of recent German penetration by an account of earlier activities.

### BEFORE AND DURING WORLD WAR I

Germany, as an imperialist competitor, appeared on the horizon of Iranian politics later than Russia and Great Britain. The unification and strengthening of Germany under Bismarck was not accompanied by interest in the Middle East. It was only after the retirement of the Iron Chancellor that German policy definitely turned toward that area. The visit that Kaiser Wilhelm paid to the Ottoman possessions in 1898 can be regarded as a turning point in German policy. After that time Imperial Germany made persistent efforts to secure a "place under the sun" in the Persian Gulf area. In 1903 the Deutsche Bank obtained the famous concession to construct the rail-road that would link Berlin with Bagdad. The B-B

railway was to  
be the main artery for German influence in  
Mesopotamia and the  
Persian Gulf. It was eventually to be extended to  
Basra. This railway  
development was accompanied by the establishment  
on the Gulf  
shores, including the territory of Iran, of a number of  
German  
import-export firms, of which the largest were  
Robert Wonckhaus